

GEORGE ADE TELLS OF DOC HORNE OF THE ALFALFA HOTEL AND HIS FRIENDS---IT BEING A TALE OF A QUEER BETROTHAL

By GEORGE ADE.

THE lightning dentist stood in the doorway of the Alfalfa European Hotel and looked out at the dripping street. The granite blocks of the pavement were newly washed, and they shone in surprised cleanliness where the light fell on them.

A hansom cab rolled by, the horse steaming and the driver crouched inside a great rubber coat. Only one light could be seen in the big, water soaked building opposite, and that was in a first floor office where a late employee was doubled over a ledger.

One or two pedestrians sloshed along, bracing their umbrellas against the cold wind. The lightning dentist turned up his coat collar and shivered with sympathy. A stronger gust of wind blew the raindrops against his face and he retreated.

He saw Doc Horne, the actor and the lush seated in drooping silence near the steam heater. They had moved their chairs toward the radiator as if to deceive themselves, but they knew the radiator was the coldest thing in the room. Doc Horne had been attempting to read an evening paper. Even the paper was moist, for it did not crackle when he folded it and gave it a disgusted frown.

"Bad night," observed the dentist, gloomily rubbing his hands.

"Miserable, miserable," said Doc Horne.

"It's cold in this office to-night," said the dentist. "I wish I knew where to go or what to do."

"We might go into the bar and see Steve," said the lush, hopefully.

This suggestion was received in silence.

"Or," continued the lush, "we might go up to my room and send down for something to drink. Come on; it will be more comfortable up there."

The invitation was accepted without any enthusiasm. Before the party went upstairs the lush sent the bellboy for a bottle of whiskey and a large sized reservoir of seltzer.

Whenever the lush had visitors he always made these preparations for entertaining them, no matter whether they drank or not. Doc Horne was a total abstainer. The actor was a cautious drinker, who when dragged to the bar usually compromised on sweet Catawba wine or a small glass of beer. Even the lightning dentist, although he told stories of fabulous expenditures for wine while visiting in Cincinnati, seldom took more than one drink an evening.

Nevertheless, the lush put the whiskey, the seltzer, the ice and the glasses on the table in his room and confidently invited his friends to "drink hearty." The lightning dentist took his one drink, although he nearly choked in the effort, and the others mildly protested and asked to be excused.

The lush expressed himself as disappointed at their failure to be "good fellows," and drank two magnificent highballs in order to rebuke them. Then he sat on the bed and at intervals thereafter he would point at the bottles on the table and look inquiringly at his guests, who never failed to shake their heads.

The conversation had gone the range of commonplaces, mostly in regard to the weather, and then it turned upon the fact that a European hotel on a wet and chilly night is not the most cheerful place in the world.

"Here we are, gentlemen, four of us," said Doc Horne. "All of us have reached the age at which men should marry—perhaps all have passed the age at which it is advisable to choose a helpmate."

"That's a fact, Doc," said the lush, reaching for the seltzer.

"Of course, matrimony is a lottery. Perhaps we are better off than if we had joined the Benedicks, but on a night like this it occurs to me that if I were seated before my own grate fire in my own library, with my own children around me, I would be happier than I am here." Doc made a reassuring gesture, and continued: "I don't mean to reflect on the hospitality of our friend here or intimate that I am not satisfied with the present company, but—"

"Certainly, we understand," said the actor.

"If we were to own up, gentlemen, I suppose every man jack of us came very near being married at some time or other."

The lush softly prepared another highball.

"Doctor, I consider it quite remarkable that you never married," said the actor.

"Maybe he couldn't find a woman good enough for him," suggested the dentist.

"I have met thousands who were too good for any man who ever lived," replied Doc, with considerable warmth.

"The problem in matrimony is not to find a good woman. The problem is to find a woman who will be sufficiently patient and charitable to bear with the faults which are common to the sex represented here this evening."

"The ladies," said the lush, arising from the bed and holding out the glass as if to offer a toast.

"Sit down!" commanded the dentist. "It is largely a question of compatibility," continued Doc. "Harmless compound No. 1—harmless compound No. 2. You put them together and the result is an explosive. Poison No. 1 added to poison No. 2 gives a harmless neutral. Two beautiful colors—put them together and you have discord. Matrimony is often a plunge in the dark. The man never knows whether he will land on a bed of roses or in a nest of thorns."

"That is, he doesn't know unless he has knowledge of women based on the study of many marriages and the resulting experiences. Now I know just what kind of a wife I ought to have, but it has required many years of study for me to find it out. I know you gentlemen fairly well. I know the kind of wife that each of you ought to—"

"Do you for a fact, Doc?" asked the dentist, eagerly.

"What kind 'o wife I ought to have, Doc?" asked the lush.

"None just at present," replied Doc, closing his lips tightly.

"Thanks," and he reached for the bottle.

"Doc, you said a while ago that probably every one of us had come very near being married at some time or other," put in the dentist. "Now, as a matter of fact, how near did you ever come to it?"

"I was married once," said Doc, quietly.

"Wha-ah!"

"I was and I was not. I am a single man in the United States. In Brazil, at this minute, I would be a married man, provided Rita is still living."

"What's her name—Rita?"

"Yes, I haven't seen her in thirty years. That's rather a long time for a man to remain away from his wife, eh?"

He winked at the dentist and shook with inward laughter. They waited.

"The circumstances were rather peculiar," began Doc, gazing hard at the floor. "It was in, let's see—yes, 1865, I was in New York that spring to transact some business and while there I became acquainted with a Brazilian named Miguel Bartos, a coffee planter."

He had been visiting in New York and I had met him at a club there. He was about to return to Brazil in a sailing vessel that he owned and he invited me to go as far as Savannah with him.

"Well, we had lovely weather, and

They were to touch at Savannah, I remember, to get the mail and some small supplies. I had a little time at my disposal, so I accepted the invitation. I didn't know until after we sailed that Senhor Bartos—"

"I knew him well," said the lush.

"I didn't know that he had a daughter," continued Doc, ignoring the interruption. "She was a perfect specimen of the Spanish type of beauty—olive complexion, dark hair and the most wonderful eyes I ever saw. Senhor Bartos and the daughter, his business partner, named Pramada, and I were the only passengers on board. The captain was a Spaniard, the first mate an American who lived in the tropics for years, and the crew was made up entirely of Brazilians."

"Well, we had lovely weather, and

very naturally I was thrown into the society of the senorita much of the time. I showed her many attentions, but no more than I thought were due from any American gentleman under the circumstances. I didn't realize until it was too late that she was completely infatuated with me."

"How could she help herself?" asked the lush.

"Now, sir," said Doc, turning on the lush, "will you allow me to continue?"

"Sure thing," replied the lush, with a faltering salute.

"If I had remembered Spanish customs, particularly as they are localized in Brazil, I wouldn't have allowed myself to become entangled. She was a young girl, and I was considerably her senior and did not realize the significance of what I did."

One evening, in the presence of her father, I kissed her. You must remember that she was quite young. I regarded her as a mere child. Even at that I would not have presumed to take such a liberty had she not suggested it in a bantering spirit. Her father was present, and I saw no harm in it so long as he did not object.

"You may be able to appreciate my surprise and consternation, gentlemen, when Senhor Bartos called me into the cabin next day and informed me in all seriousness that according to Brazilian custom when an unmarried man kisses a woman of eligible age the act is equivalent to a betrothal and may be regarded as a marriage under the common law. He said that his daughter loved me and that he was willing to give a handsome dowry, but he would

insist that I proceed to Brazil with them and have an additional ceremony performed in the cathedral.

"When I showed my surprise and told him I had no intention of marrying his daughter he drew a dagger and would have stabbed me if Senhor Pramada had not restrained him. I was told that I would be killed if I failed to carry out the marriage contract."

"Well, there I was, I pretended to consent, but I was determined to escape when the vessel touched at Savannah. I knew every man on board had been cautioned to watch me and prevent my escape. I had to proceed with secrecy, but I managed to get the first mate on my side. He promised to help me."

"Well, when we anchored off Savannah the captain and Senhor Bartos went ashore and got my mail, but I was

given to understand that I must not leave the vessel. One of the letters that I received made it necessary that I should be in Pittsburgh in a few days, and I was more than ever determined to get away."

"Late that night the mate and I slipped on deck and dropped one of the boats into the water. Just as we jumped into the boat Senhor Bartos came on deck and began to fire on us. We pulled away, and he put a knife into his mouth and jumped overboard to follow us."

"Of course we could have escaped him, but I was afraid he would drown, so we put back and hauled him out of the water. He was nearly exhausted, but still full of deviltry, for he made a vicious lunge at me with the knife, but I grabbed his arm and took the weapon away from him and then I gave him a good hard talking to. I said:

"Senhor Bartos, I claim to be a man of honor, and I would not violate any promise, however lightly made, but you cannot come up into this part of the world and enforce your South American customs. I respect your daughter as a charming and innocent girl, but I do not propose to marry her under compulsion. I am going ashore here. You may go back to the vessel."

"Well, the mate went ashore with me. If they had ever got hold of him they would have murdered him for helping me to escape. I never heard anything more of them after that."

"It's a good thing that Brazilian law doesn't hold in this country," said the dentist.

"Our host is dead to the world," observed the actor. They turned and saw that the lush had dropped over on the pillows and fallen asleep.

"Let him rest," said Doc. "I expect we had better go out. Just turn down the gas. He'll sleep all right as he lies."

So they went out, leaving their host under the peaceful influence.

As Doc moved along the hallway toward his room the lightning dentist followed him.

"Can I see you alone for a little while?" he asked.

"Certainly, my dear sir," replied Doc with an acquiescent wave of the hand. "Come right into my room."

Doc fumbled in the darkness until he found a match and then he lighted the gas. The dentist slowly settled into a chair and held his hat in front of him.

"Doc, this—this mustn't go any further than you," he said with some embarrassment.

"I never betrayed a confidence in my life."

"It's something I wouldn't think of mentioning to any one else around the hotel."

"Whatever it may be it will be safe in my hands."

"I know that. I'll tell you what has induced me to speak. A little while ago you were speaking of matrimony and you compared it to a plunge in the dark. You said that a man never knew where he was going to land."

"I qualified that statement."

"I know you did, but that and some more things you said put me to thinking. This is what I wanted to tell you, and you mustn't whisper a word of it to any one else. I'd like to get married."

Doc looked at him with grave interest and rubbed his nose.

"I don't blame you," he said. "You heard my views this evening."

"Yes, but some of the things you said later on kind of scared me. I'd hate to make any mistake and get tied up to the wrong girl."

"There is no reason why you should make any mistake if you are properly advised. You are a good looking man, still young, well dressed, established in a profession, fair prospects, I dare say, and—"

"I've got more money put away than anybody in this hotel knows anything about," said the dentist, his voice trembling with gratification at Doc's studied eulogy. "I sold the lots the other day that I've been holding. I cleared up a thousand. Next year I expect to have an interest in the Neapolitan Dental Parlors, where I'm working now."

"It's a sure money maker. Doc, we've got ten men at work now, and I have enough extracting alone to keep me busy most of the time. We're doubling our advertising contracts and I feel so sure of staying there and making a good thing out of it that I want to settle down and have a nice little home of my own. A man can't stand this hotel life forever."

"True, true. I don't want to be inquisitive, but is there any one in particular that—"

"No, because I've simply lived between office and hotel. But I'm going to look around. I'm going to find a nice girl—and I tell you what I want you to do for me, Doc. Before I make any definite move or commit myself—understand?—I want you to meet the girl and give me your candid opinion."

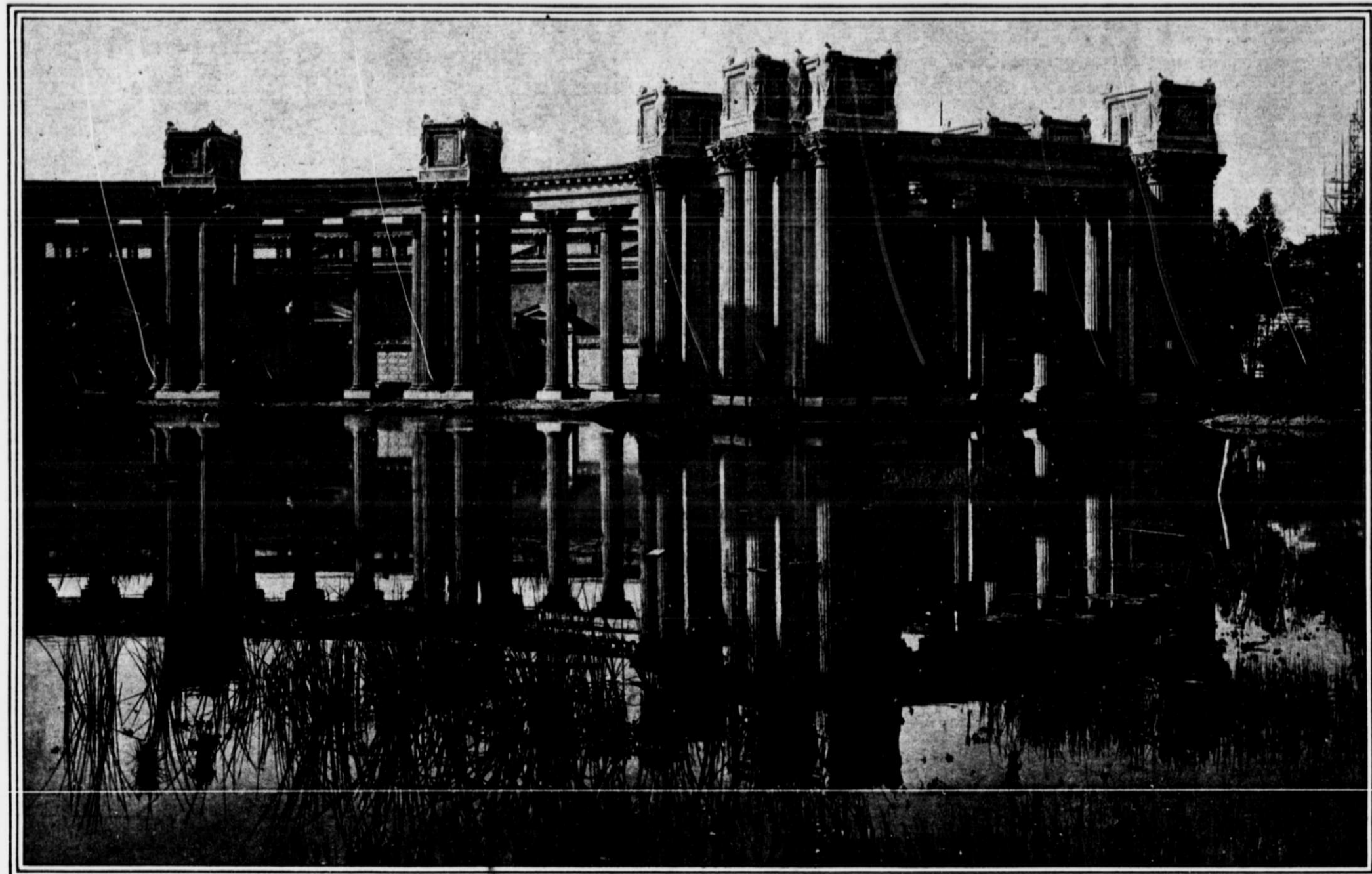
"I don't want to make any mistake. I heard you say that you could pick out the right kind of a wife for any one of your friends and I want you to promise that you'll—well, not exactly pick out one for me, but help me to select one. I don't know whether you just understand or not."

"I think I do. I am at your service at any time."

So this compact was made: that after the dentist had looked around and selected a young woman Doc should inspect her and give an expert opinion based on his vast experience with the sex.

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Large Collection of Fine Arts Assured for San Francisco Fair



Exquisite colonnade of the Palace of Fine Arts at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. The building, which is of permanent steel and concrete construction, is Roman in architecture, and fronts upon a great lagoon, which it partly envelops. The structure is 1,100 feet in its outside perimeter, and its cost exceeded \$600,000. Here will be seen a notable collection of the great works of foreign and American painters and sculptors.

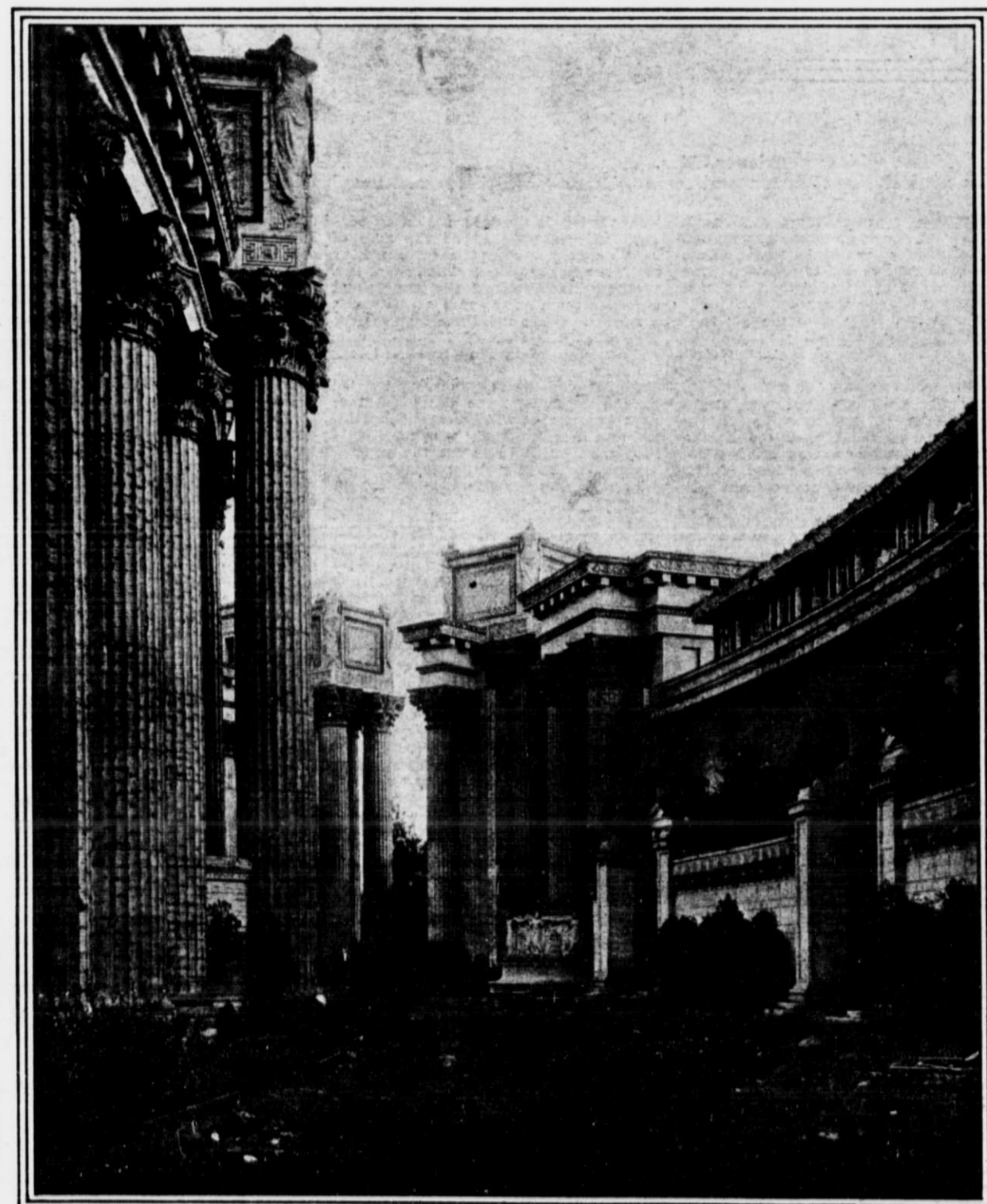
CHARLES FRANCIS BROWNE, United States Superintendent of Fine Arts Exhibit, who is in New York completing for the San Francisco exposition loans of masterpieces now hung in galleries, museums and private collections, states that European exhibits in fine arts will not be impaired by the war. Mr. Browne, who is a painter of note, explained that the United States steamship Jason, now stopping at ports of call in Europe, is taking aboard works of the masters destined for the exposition.

"There will be a very complete national exhibit from Norway with pictures for special rooms by Carl Larsson, Anders Zorn and by Liljorfs, the wonderful painter of birds and animals," said Mr. Browne. "Sweden will show her tremendous modern development, and disturbed Holland will demonstrate in her gallery her right to be termed the quaint country of Europe. France is sending over a very comprehensive collection in all forms of art, in which France is very rich. Her national building, a replica of the Palace of the Legion of Honor, promises to be one of the architectural features of the exposition."

Britain will be well represented, thanks to the activities of Joseph Pennell, the London etcher, and John S. Sargent, the painter, who have stirred up among English artists unprecedented interest in the exposition. It seems a bit early to definitely state what the German art exhibit will be, but very much is expected because Germany is able to forward her treasured objects in art to San Francisco with the assurance that they would be lodged in what is practically a United States bonded warehouse, Greece, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Spain, teeming with the art objects of the past, are among the nations loaning works of contemporary make with historic canvases from public and private galleries. The year 1915 will show quite distinctly how art has developed in America, for not only are our painters and sculptors doing more and better things in their studios but the public is viewing the work of our artists with increasing intelligence, appreciation and a desire to possess."

"The American section at the exposition is intended to quite clearly emphasize our art. It will be divided into certain definite divisions. There will be a large contemporary section, which includes the most carefully selected works produced by our painters and sculptors since the 1904 St. Louis Exposition. Then there will be two important loan collections. One, under the head of historical collection, will include paintings from our earliest times up to the present moment; the other, under the head of general loan collection, will embrace subjects chosen with great care in order to point out the art and artists who have in the greatest measure influenced our modern school."

"An innovation in art exhibition is an arrangement of a series of some twelve or more galleries, assigned to certain artists whose work has been



Corridor of Palace of Fine Arts.

felt in the development of American art. The artists chosen are recognized leaders, even "pioneers" in schools. These artists are conspicuous exponents of strong personal expression or leadership in art growth. Whistler, for instance, is one whose work all may recognize as

having a distinct influence, not only on our art, but on the art of Europe. Sargent, again, with his room of portraits, will offer an absorbing theme. Keith, the painter of the Stran and of the live oaks of California, represents the strength of the Pacific coast. Alex-

ander, Hassam, Tarbell, Redfield and others comprise distinguished leadership in this series of galleries."

Superintendent Browne stated further that it is the policy of the department of fine arts to hang pictures as far as possible by groups so as to

create harmonies and to suggest intimacy. The galleries, he explained, are now being arranged and draperies of various tints applied, so that each canvas will fit into a receptive environment.

"We wonder what the 'Forty-niner' would say if to-day he stood at the palace entrance and viewed the shipments of magnificent canvases which have crossed with speed and safety the great stretches over which he and the pioneers journeyed with a maximum of suffering and months of labor. No period in history records such contrast. Seventy years ago only a few miserable huts might have been seen on the shores of San Francisco Bay; to-day we behold a group of palaces interwoven with the colors of the Orient, of an architecture about which men ever dreamed but never before viewed."

"It is early," continued Mr. Browne, "to fully chronicle the achievements in art collection made here and abroad in the last few months, but when the galleries are hung and all is in order visitors to the exposition will behold a fine art assemblage unapproached by any exhibition of the past and offering to the art lovers of the world much that has never before been displayed."

The galleries of Europe and America have been ransacked for the largest and most distinctive loan collection of bronzes and statuary ever assembled at a world conference. These works of art will be largely contemporaneous, the display being limited to works produced during the decade past.

Advantage is taken of the mild California climate to have the gallery of statuary out of doors in the shelter of the long colonnades. This display appropriately will be dominated by the first statue ever dedicated to Motherhood—a heroic group in bronze executed by Charles Gaffey, which typifies the Argonauts.

In all the unexampled setting of architectural wonders and masterful colors probably the Palace of Fine Arts will hold fast the eye of the visitor much longer than is bestowed on any other single building within the exposition of 635 acres. The fine arts gallery sits midway between the blue waters of San Francisco Bay and the green and purple hills on which rests the Presidio Military Reservation. The place is in itself one of America's most alluring while exhibits fixed in a semi-tropical land of strange buildings and magnificent ivory colored palaces; and long after this greatest of world's fairs is over it will be treasured in memory. This palace is likely to stand a monument to the grandeur of the best American men and women have achieved in the fields of industry, science, study and every other endeavor.

As the building rests on United States army property its final disposition will be a matter for the War Department to determine. Of all the buildings included within the City of States and Nations the Palace of Fine Arts has the aspect most strongly of permanence.

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